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RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 4252
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ PRIORITY 6596
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 3959
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO PRIORITY 7527
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 2602
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 0591
RUEHRG/AMCONSUL RECIFE PRIORITY 8487
RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO PRIORITY 6640
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 001266

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TAGS: PREL KDEM PREF BR BO

SUBJECT: BRAZIL FOREIGN MINISTRY ON BOLIVIA SITUATION

REF: A. SECSTATE 99473

1B. BRASILIA 1253 (NOTAL)

1C. LA PAZ 2036 (NOTAL)

Classified By: Political Counselor Stephen M. Liston, reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) PolCounselor delivered ref A demarche on September 22 to the Brazilian Foreign Ministry South America 1 Division (Mercosul countries) Chief, Minister Joao Luis Pereira Pinto, who is handling all of South America in the absence of his counterpart who handles the Andes and Under Secretary for South America Enio Cordeiro. (Note: Per ref B, PolCounselor had previously delivered the demarche to the presidency on September 19.) Pinto thanked PolCounselor for the information on the expulsions and indicated that he thought the U.S. response was entirely appropriate.

12. (C) Despite local press reports that negotiations between the Bolivian government and opposition were stalled, Pereira Pinto said that the press was overstating the problems. Although the talks were difficult and patience would be required, he said that it was essential to keep the parties at the negotiating table. Pereira Pinto thought that the Catholic Church had the most credibility with both sides and would therefore have a key role in keeping negotiations moving. He confirmed that Ambassador Macedo Soares, a former Under Secretary for South America, was leading Brazil's delegation to observe the talks. Pereira Pinto also said that, as head of the UNASUL "logistics" committee (one of three created at the September 15 emergency meeting), Brazilian Defense Minister Nelson Jobim would host the Bolivian Defense Minister on September 25. The goal is to see what type of material support the GOB needs, and to pass these requests along to other UNASUL countries.

13. (SBU) PolCouns asked about the number of people coming across the border into Brazil as a result of the instability. Pereira Pinto said that there are no hotels rooms left in Brasileia, the border town in the Brazilian state of Acre across from Bolivia's Pando Department, but described this as an indication that most of those crossing were middle class or above and able to care for themselves. He indicated that the numbers of those seeking shelter in Brazil--including both Bolivians and Brazilian farmers--were small enough that it was not a problem. Pereira Pinto confirmed that Bolivians enjoy de facto access to Brazilian social services even though an agreement providing legal access has not yet been signed. Asked about any official requests for asylum or

refugee status, Pereira Pinto said he was not aware of any. He added that there was no truth to news reports that the Bolivian Government had requested the Brazilian government return Bolivian citizens allegedly involved in anti-government violence in Pando.

¶4. (C) Comment: The GOB is eager to promote a peaceful resolution to the Bolivia crisis and help restore stability. Nonetheless, the GOB is walking a difficult line. Sensitive to protect what it sees as the overriding principles of non-interference and sanctity of borders, the GOB is supporting the "constitutional government" in Bolivia and insisting that the Bolivian government should determine how the international community plays a role. Although the GOB sees this as the best way to keep a lid on the crisis and encourage Evo Morales to stay at the negotiating table, the GOB's support for the Bolivian government, particularly if it extends to material support, may undermine its credibility with the opposition as a neutral partner. At the same time, Brazilians in states bordering Bolivia strongly support the Bolivian opposition, Brazilian commercial interests remain at risk from violence, and the GOB has already taken criticism domestically for its previous "appeasement" of Morales. For the GOB, the safest route is support for dialogue in Bolivia, in its capacity as a member of UNASUL. Even should talks break down and violence increase, however, the GOB is likely to maintain its support for the "constitutional government," absent egregious, public, and continuing violations of human rights.

KUBISKE